GLIMPSES OF LIFE FROM WITHIN FROM 1860 TO 1895

WILLIAM MORRISON, J.P.

*Honorary Captain and Quartermaster, Army Medical Service
(Lieutenant of Orderlies 1879-1881)*

(Continued)

William Morrison after 1879

Sir William Henry Gregory's tenure of office was a great success, while the memorials to his wise and judicious administrative capacity are seen in the extension of Railways, Roads, Public Buildings, Medical School, Harbour extension and a Colonial Museum, a record of which few Governors can lay claim in an administration of five years. During his tenure of office the coffee enterprises began to show symptoms of decay, but this only aroused the planters to exploit the capabilities of the soil and soon tea and Cinchona cultivation followed in the wake of the expiring coffee industry. Their foresight and perseverance have been amply rewarded and the famous pearl producing Colony stands as ever

“ The best and brightest gem
in Britain's orient diadem.”

It is no reflection on Governors or other officials when we maintain that to the late Alister Mackenzie Ferguson, C.M.G. is due the largest measure of credit in bringing about the industrial prosperity that has raised the Colony to its present proud position. For more than sixty years he has been in the front tank of citizenship and by voice and pen made his influence felt in the government of the Colony, and in raising the native population to the realization of their latent capabilities and into loyal subjects of the British Empire.

In the front rank of social and sanitary reformers he made the cause of the people his own and lived to see his labours consummated in the peace and prosperity of the people, and to see Lord Torrington's administration discounted by popular acclamation. His labours in the educational needs of the community have been long and continuous; and now the Burgher and native youths compete for their share in the renumeration offices in the Civil Service and in the Commercial and Professional prizes in the Colony.

On 26 March 1877 I bade farewell to the land of the spicy breezes, embarking on board the British Indian Steamboat “ Merkara ” for London. The voyage to Aden was monotonous in the extreme, the sea as smooth as a millpond and but for the gambols of the dolphins and porpoises, and occasionally enlivened by the flirtations of a few grass widows on board, there was nothing in sea or sky to arrest attention. The half-dead Anglo-Indians going home to recruit their exhausted energies could not initiate any of the enlivening amusements that invariably make up the daily routine of a long sea voyage when outwards bound.

Among the desperate cases on board was a gentleman who was a passenger with me from London in 1873 in the “ Vibilia ” and was now returning home from Calcutta prostrate from chronic dysentery. He went out as a first class passenger, but was returning second class. He had buried his wife in India. Broken in body and in spirit he longed for the termination of the voyage which was to land him in London.

I found him in a top bunk in a second class cabin, truly an object of extreme pity. I went at once to the Captain and pointed out that the case was one that demanded isolated treatment and begged that this man should be transferred to a comfortable berth on deck where he could have fresh air, light and ventilation. The Captain remembered that on my voyage out in his ship I had taken up the duties of the deposed ship's doctor which he had not forgotten. After some pleading, a bunk appropriated by the ship's Purser as a storeroom was cleared out and my friend was soon installed in his new quarters. His convalescence was marvellous. The ship's doctor took little or no interest in his work. His primary object was flirting about the deck with such of the lady passengers as felt disposed to accept his fawning and thus banish ennui.

Whether from callousness or inexperience he took little note of the serious cases under his charge, cases, that to the professional man, should have been particularly interesting. One such case was that of an East India Railway official suffering from debility accentuated by a liver abscess. He lay in his deck chair night and day with a minimum of comfort and attention. It was arranged that he would be left in Aden to recover sufficiently to continue the homeward journey. On reaching Aden it was discovered that there was no civil hospital there and he must go on to Suez. I suggested to the Chief Officer that we should oppose the man's landing there, as it would assuredly

result in his death, pointing out that his removal from the ship into the boat would burst the abscess and death would ensue before he reached the hospital. My reason for keeping him on board was the possibility that if he entered the Mediterranean he could have his abscess tapped in Malta, and given a chance of life in the colder climate.

The doctor was obstinate and insisted on getting rid of the man, and on arrival at Suez he was transferred to the boat that was to convey him to the shore and to the hospital.

After procuring water and provisions we steamed into the Canal leaving our disconsolate invalid among strangers. He had calculated on having his Whit Sunday in England. On reaching Port Said I noticed that among the documents handed to the Chief Officer was a telegram. I asked him if that was the announcement of the patient's death. He replied in the affirmative, adding that he died a quarter of an hour after leaving the ship and before reaching the hospital. The practice of appointing newly qualified fledglings to passenger ships did not commend itself to me.

The doctor on returning to England entered the British Army, then popular for such as failed to make civil practice a profitable investment. He entered the Army under a warrant that dispensed with age limit, examination or test except the legal qualification to practice medicine. Happily since 1879 this has ceased. The medical officers who entered at that time were known in the Department as "one hundred pounders" because after ten years they were entitled to an honorarium of one thousand pounds. Owing to the dearth of candidates for the Army Medical Service, these were in course of time absorbed into the Department, but few if any, have risen to administrative rank in the Service. (*W.K.M. a. I was surprised on board a ship and at Aden, the Ship's doctor was asked to produce his diploma. He went down below and came up with it. b. When I sat the Entrance Examination for the R.A.M.C. in July 1913 there were 21 candidates for five places. B.M.J. August 2nd 1913, page 283*).

After an uneventful run through the Mediterranean and the Bay of Biscay, we sighted the white cliffs of Dover on the morning of the 23rd April, delighted to behold the hospitable if cold shores of old England. On reaching English soil I hastened to report my arrival home at the Headquarters, Army Medical Department, 6 Whitehall Yard, and was ordered to take up duty in the Station Hospital, Guernsey on the expiration of my leave of absence. Early in June I reported myself for duty and entered on two of the happiest years of my life. Apparently my reputation preceeded me, the night before I entered on my duties the sick and hospital subordinates had a "spree" with the connivance of the wardmaster. The plea under which this exceptional liberty was conceded was that they were aware that on my assumption of duties alcoholic beverages would be banished from the hospital except when ordered by the Medical Officers. It was singularly pleasant to notice the agreeable manner in which six bibulous souls accepted the inevitable. Three of the six saved twenty pounds during my two years residence in the island; while their general conduct and attention to duty merited the highest commendation. The other three left the station on promotion. The reversion to ward supervision from medical stores duties was a delightful change. The practical instruction I had from the private practitioner under whom I served in Perth was now of service both to myself and to the medical officers, as all the minor dressings and ailments were attended to at all hours of the day and night without unnecessarily calling the medical officer.

I had as Senior Medical Officer one of the kindest men in the British Army, who endeared himself to subordinates and patients by his kind and considerate treatment. The Army Medical Department was at this particular time entering a new state of existence. Aitkens' voluminous "Compendium of Medical Lore", Longmore on "Gunshot Wounds" with the "Lancet" and the "British Medical Journal" found their way to the dustcart or to the cookhouse to baste the chickens. Army Discipline Acts, Royal Warrants for Pay and Promotion, Queen's Regulations and Drill Books became the constant literature of medical officers. By night and day the "Stretcher Drill Book" was in evidence. It had been appropriated from Surgeon Major Moffitt's Book of Instruction for the Army Hospital Corps; the only original sentence penned by the new editor pointed unmistakeably to the nationality of the compiler, giving the information "that the new pattern stretcher will fit into any ambulance wagon, if it is not too wide or too long". At some stations this innovation banished the professional instinct and almost obliterated the knowledge gained by years of patient toil and study. Patients were admitted and discharged, diet sheets marked with regularity weekly. Returns of sick rendered with strict punctuality, but the treatment of the sick, at times, seemed to become of secondary importance. Henceforth the cry must be loud and clear for combatant rank. The stethoscope was in danger of being thrown aside in the eagerness to practice the hitherto neglected sword exercise.

We were fortunately unaffected by this innovation; my medical officers left me to care for what was left of discipline in the Service and during two years we had but one crime, and that a trifling one, among the orderlies of the Army Hospital Corps, and five promotions.

I had not been long at the station when I noticed that one of the orderlies never left the hospital enclosure. On enquiring of the reason for this man's unusual manner, I was informed that the man was afraid that if he went out he would return drunk and find himself in the Guard Room when he sobered and a good drunk was not worth the loss of his hair. Finding that he was fairly well educated and intelligent I suggested that he should qualify for promotion offering to assist him each evening with his studies. This he gladly accepted, and on the restoration of his good conduct badges was recommended for promotion, examined and advanced to the rank of Corporal and transferred to the Headquarters of the District. A year after he left the station he wrote me a letter of thanks for the discipline maintained in the hospital and expressed regret that I had not joined the station two years earlier than I did, in which case he would have had seniority as Sergeant two years earlier than he attained it. So much for reasonably strict discipline and inculcation of total abstinence principles.

Shortly after joining the station the 104th Regiment was relieved by the 105th under the Command of Colonel Harry Bell from Colchester. Among the cases transferred from the Colchester Station Hospital was a man who had been treated there for dyspepsia. Before the first week was over I remarked to the junior medical officer that the man's ailment was mental and not physical. This drew a reproof for an unsought opinion. I watched the man late and early and observed that whenever the light in the ward was lowered, he would leave his bed and raise the light to its full extent. I then suggested to the Roman Catholic Chaplain that he should have a quiet talk with him and try to ascertain the cause of his nervous restlessness. He essayed to solve the mystery but failed to get the man's confidence. I then asked the medical officer treating the case

that in order to keep the man under observation, that the patient should be put into one of the smaller wards, and a special orderly appointed to watch his movements. To this neither medical officer would consent. I then told the Senior Medical Officer that whenever I entered the ward, which was five or six times a day, he was sharpening his razor and that from previous experience of melancholic patients I was positive that he had suicidal tendencies. I was laughed at for my pains by both medical officers. I asked permission to remove his razor, knife and fork. This was also refused. Next morning I insisted on having a special orderly to watch him, declining to be responsible for what ever might happen from that hour. This was reluctantly conceded, and so as not to arouse suspicion the attendant was dressed as an ordinary patient with instructions to keep his charge in sight. My last visit to the ward was at 11-30 p.m. when all seemed quiet. At 7-15 a.m. when walking up and down in front of the hospital, a head popped out of the window in that ward, shouting "come up sir, come up Tom Hyland has cut his throat". He was dead in ten minutes. The post mortem examination justified my opinion, every organ in the body being particularly healthy and free from disease.

Immediately after the incident referred to above, a private of the same regiment reported himself sick with symptoms of malarial fever. He professed to having recently returned from China, where he had been employed for several years in the service of the Peninsular and Orient Steamship Company. No sooner than did one supposed ailment disappear than another supervened. This went on for six weeks. I was dubious about his sincerity and hinted my doubts to the medical officer. I had solid reasons for concluding that his knowledge of China was picked up in the Garrison Library. Three weeks later a letter was received from a solicitor in Cardiff enclosing a *carte de visite* of a man who was wanted there and who was supposed to be serving in the 105th Regiment in Guernsey. With this was a note giving the man's name in the 13th Hussars from which he had deserted twelve months earlier.

I scanned every face for the duplicate. At last it dawned on me that the patient in the corner of No. 2 Ward answered the description. A quiet examination confirmed my suspicions. I communicated with the Depot of the 13th Hussars at Canterbury and in a few days had particulars which confirmed my suspicions. On the following day I suggested to the medical officer that as this man seemed to have a complication of most of the ordinary disease in the "Nomenclature of Diseases" he should be isolated and carefully nursed as I would have a better opportunity of watching the case than I had in a fully occupied ward. Tom Hyland's case being fresh in the memory my suggestion was accepted without a note of dissent. I removed him accordingly and placed him under the care of a special sick attendant. Next morning to my surprise the patient sent for me and informed me that he was now alright and fit to return to duty. He was to be discharged as an ordinary patient recovered, and normally would have been returned to barracks under the sick corporal, but instead I sent for his Colour-Sergeant asking him to bring a file of the guard and a Corporal. On their arrival I handed him over, to his amazement, as a deserter from the 13th Hussars. He was sent under escort to Canterbury, tried by Court Martial for desertion and sentenced to six months imprisonment. About the same time a recruit came into hospital and his knowledge of heart disease and invaliding procedures in the Army, led me to believe he was one of those scoundrels that join regiments, get invalided out and then enlist again. Clever scoundrels can pass in and out of the service for several years from one regiment to another without fear of detection.

On Boxing Day, 26th December 1877, the Armourer Sergeant of the 105th Regiment enjoyed himself in the early morning rabbit shooting. Having incautiously stepped over a hedge his gun accidentally discharged itself into the palm of his left hand. Bandaging his wrist with his pocket handkerchief he ran to the hospital. I examined his hand, dressed it and sent for both medical officers. Colonel Harry Bell, Commanding the Regiment, hearing of the mishap to his armourer hastened to hospital to ascertain the nature of the accident. He begged me to convey to the medical officer his wish and hope that the hand should not be amputated, as if the thumb and index finger could be saved he would be retained in his appointment as Regimental Armourer. On the arrival of the medical officers it was decided to amputate the hand. I gave the Senior Medical Officer Colonel Bell's message, and pleaded that the hand might not be sacrificed, adding that conservative surgery was the chief aim of the profession. After a deal of pleading, it was decided to remove the two crushed fingers and save the hand. The result was peculiarly satisfying to the Senior Medical Officer and in six weeks the Armourer returned to duty. His gratitude was unbounded for the preservation of his hand.

I had at this station practical insight into the crooked ways of Royal Engineer Department subordinates and observed how easy is the decensus in Avernum when an unscrupulous surveyor came under the sway of an unscrupulous contractor. I saw what was not intended but for four eyes. Particular pains were taken to swell the damages against the hospital and I was equally determined to resist unjust oppression and on three occasions appealed to the War Office against the assessment and was successful on each occasion. On personally explaining to Colonel Crease about the matters he intimated to the Foreman of Works to exercise more judgement in his assessment against the hospital.

Early in 1878 (*W.K.M. At this time he was still only a Colour-Sergeant*), a soldier of the Garrison who had too freely indulged in the Royal Artillery canteen challenged a comrade to swim the bay under the barracks for a wager. Carrying too heavy a load of Randall's beer he was unequal to the contest and was drowned. An anonymous writer to the press, a local paper animadverted on the culpable negligence of the Commanding Officer of the Royal Artillery in carrying on an authorised mantrap.

I was accused of the authorship because of my well-known aversion to the drink trade, and was waited on by the Garrison Sergeant Major with a purported request from the Brigade Major as to whether I was prepared to substantiate the charge of culpable negligence against the Officer Commanding the Royal Artillery. To this I made answer that if I felt disposed I would have little difficulty in justifying the impeachment, but as I acknowledged no earthly "Father Confessor" I declined to gratify impertinent curiosity and bowed my interrogator to the door. On hearing the Garrison "Jackal" had interviewed me on the matter Barrack Sergeant McCulloch (late of the 21st Royal Scots Fusiliers) acknowledged the authorship having witnessed the unfortunate accident. He was immediately removed from the Station, and sent to duty at the Brigade Depot at Lincoln.

Such is the treatment meted out to a soldier who dares to pillory superior offenders in the newspapers. He is in fact told that he has no legal citizenship. In the matter of equity the Army administration is but little removed from the dark days of the Stuarts.

There is a peculiar interest in watching a man suspected of malingering. With the advent of Surgeon Major Purdon I felt rather handicapped. He and the Senior Medical

Officer were of the advanced humanitarian type of men who would rather be imposed on than seem to deal harshly with the malingerer. I pointed out to Dr. Purdon a type of his class. Looking at the man he replied in the purest Irish brogue "Och! Poor Devil, he can't help himself, he has no strength in him to do a day's work. Do you know what the creature is?" To this enquiry I replied that I knew nothing about him except what his medical history sheet tells me.

"Well I'll tell you what he is: he is the offspring of an old man and a young woman." Advancing to the bedside the following conversation took place.

"What is your name?" "Richmond Sir." "Well Richmond! is your father alive?" "No Sir." "Then he's dead?" "Yes Sir." "How old was he when he died?" "He was eighty-four Sir." "How long is he dead?" "Four years Sir." "If he was living now would he be eighty-eight?" "Yes Sir." "Is your mother alive?" "Yes Sir." "How old is she?" "Forty Sir." "Four from forty is thirty-six. She was thirty-six when your father died." "Yes Sir." "You don't like hard work?" "No Sir." "Then take my advice and don't try it."

Turning to me with a grin he remarked "Shure didn't I tell you what he was, you could tell it from the formation of his teeth and jaws." I must confess my inability to arrive at such definite conclusions from such a questionable standpoint.

I had another interesting case of malingering. A strong healthy soldier of two years service. He was tired of the Service and concluded that the easiest way out was through the hospital. He had seen others go out by the back door. He reported sick complaining of pains in the left breast and shortness of breath when at running drill and with general symptoms of heart disease. Each morning I found him watching the gate until he saw the Senior Medical Officer come into the hospital. He would then retire into the lavatory, and for half an hour or more, would exert himself in purposeless scrubbing of the floor with a long-handled scrubbing brush, a dry scrubber. He was not aware that his movements were closely watched. I noticed that while the stethoscope was being used he kept scratching his right breast with his nails with the view of passing the sound into the instrument. Having noticed this for some days I mentioned it to the two medical officers. I was told there was a very distinct bruit.

I asked Dr. Purdon to come up to the hospital at 3 o'clock. I kept my man pretty much in view during the day. About an hour after dinner, the ward orderly brought me some soap pellets and a piece of yellow soap he had taken out of this man's bed. Dr. Purdon arrived at 3 o'clock and immediately examined the man very minutely and getting up off his knee he yelled at the fellow in rather unparliamentary language "You incorrigible whelp, the devil the het is the matter wid you?" I then produced the soap pills found in his bed as conclusive proof that my suspicions were well founded. On the following morning Dr. Purdon reported to the Senior Medical Officer the result of his afternoon visit remarking they had both been deceived. The outcome was that a full report of the case was sent to Colonel Bell with the request that to obviate a Court Martial he should deal regimentally with the case. This was done by awarding the malingerer seven days imprisonment with hard labour and 21 days confinement to barracks, the maximum punitive power then vested in Commanding Officers. From that day malingering finished in that regiment.

Early in 1878 the 75th Regiment, the Gordon Highlanders, relieved the 105th, the

King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. The regiment was under the command of an efficient old soldier, who had graduated through the ranks and who worthily sustained the position to which his talents and common sense had raised him. Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Wadson, V.C. was a pattern commanding officer. The Sergeant-Major and Staff-Sergeants were of the best type of British Infantry and zealous for the maintenance of the Regiment. I was fortunate in obtaining a good soldier as Senior Medical Officer's orderly. A typical Irishman, genial and industrious, ingratiating himself into general favour by his exuberant native wit. Had Samuel Lever met him he would have been the hero of a readable story. His conversational powers, and smart repartee justified his claim to the nationality of which he boasted, He would have made a capital companion for an old colonial suffering from a torpid liver, as his wit was natural and unbounded. He was told that the hospital cook had applied for a transfer from the station having served there for three years. He quietly remarked that if the unfortunate cook would, if the request were conceded, find himself in the position of the unfortunate Protestants who sought shelter in Purgatory, he was destined to go further and fare worse. He was tolerant of all sections of the Christian Church save the "Plymouth Brethren". I questioned one of the Sergeants of the regiment as to the reason of Pat's intense dislike of the "brethren". He informed me that when stationed in Singapore, a Major of that sect commanded the detachment to which Pat belonged. This officer believed that God's forgiveness would reach him in the exercise of clemency towards a "Plymouth Brother", but the maintenance of discipline required the rigid enforcement of the punitive provision of the Army Discipline towards the rest of mankind.

At the weekly inspection of the barracks, the Major observed that a spider's web adorned the wall contiguous to this man's bed, the Major in a bellicose tone demanded to know to whom the spider's web belonged. To this question Pat, with the utmost *sang froid* replied "The spider, Sor!" For this piece of information he was sentenced to three days punishment drill. As he had not paraded with the defaulters, the Sergeant sent for him to ascertain the reason for his absence. To this he coolly replied "Shure I have no drill to do." "Did not the Major give you three days drill this morning?" "Shure he gave the spider three days drill and if you can catch him you can drill him." He was at once ordered to the Guard Room and on the following morning the wit-despising Major sentenced him to seven days imprisonment with hard labour. Knowledge of military law and ready wit are unappreciated acquisitions in the British Army.

I had for many years been peculiarly successful in the reclamation of men who had been victims of intemperance. My system was not one of drugs but a sympathetic watchfulness and admonition such as the practical teaching of the ritual of Good Templary cannot fail to impress on the man or woman consecrated to the work of human restoration to forfeited bliss. I never came in touch with a drink-besotted soul, but the Charge of the Chief Templar aroused in me the desire to work to reclaim that flotsam on the ocean of social life. "We are here to work, let us do it, and so advance our common cause and honour God."

On returning from Ceylon I found that the Good Templar Lodges had been turned into pleasant evening resorts, where, with the Bible still on the Altar, comic and ribald songs predominated; frivolity had usurped the place of the serious deportment that first characterized the Order. Instead of having a "fraternal home where the destroyer could never enter" I found every phase of the drinking saloon there but the drink. I

severed my connection with the Order with regret, feeling that the best human Agency ever adopted for the moral and spiritual elevation of the race, had been prostituted to the insane craving for frivolity. I had among the subordinates in the hospital several who by the enforcement of discipline and considerate treatment had been weaned from the worship of Bacchus and transformed into good and useful soldiers.

I was privileged to assist a few of them into good appointments in civil life on their transfer into the Reserve. One of those when I took him in hand was supposed to be beyond the possibility of reformation. He was a gunner in the Royal Artillery and had come into hospital from the Government Military Prison, where he had done six months for striking a non-commissioned officer when drunk. I was told that I would regret taking him into hospital employ. To this I turned a deaf ear, as I was determined, if possible, to save him from the evil influence of his surroundings. I wished him to sign the pledge of total abstinence as the condition of his employment in hospital. After eighteen months of excellent work in the hospital, he purchased a fine silver lever watch, and had eighteen pounds in the savings bank after the purchase of the watch. The Roman Catholic chaplain gratefully informed me that since I took the man in hand he had been a most diligent attender at the Chapel services when off duty.

Early in January 1879 the fifth of my orderlies in succession left the Station on promotion. General The Hon. St. George Foley, Commanding the District and Governor of the Islands, seeing the route for the man's removal, enquired of the Brigade Major, if he could explain how it was that every man of the Army Hospital Corps who left the Station in Guernsey, left on promotion, while those who left Alderney during the same period had done so after several committals to the Garrison Cells.

The Brigade Major appealed to the Garrison Sergeant Major for the solution of the problem. This functionary told the General that in the Station Hospital in Guernsey the Sergeant trained his orderlies to qualify for promotion, that strict discipline tempered with encouragement to study was a feature of the establishment, that total abstinence was encouraged, if not the basis of the assistance given to study: while in Alderney the relationship between the Sergeant and orderlies was evident from the wilful destruction of the Sergeant's cabbage garden by the orderlies.

The General left instructions for the Senior Medical Officer to call at his office the following day. He enquired minutely into the information given him by the Sergeant Major and on receiving confirmation of the same, instructed the Senior Medical Officer to submit my name for a Commission in the Corps which would give him great pleasure to recommend. It gave greater pleasure to the Senior Medical Officer, and after a few days I was ordered to London for examination on the lines indicated in a letter sent out from the office in the previous November. This letter was addressed to the Principal Medical Officers of Districts, but was suppressed by the Principal Medical Officer's clerk in Portsmouth, from a fear that "special intelligence" in the District was not confined to the two aspirants to a commission in that particular station.

When its suppression was communicated to Surgeon William Munro, C.B., the Head of the Medical Branch at the War Office, he demanded an explanation, an explanation which was at variance with the truth.

Instead of attending the examination I was ordered to the Director-General's Office for duty. I reluctantly left Guernsey in the first week of June 1879, where I had served

under Surgeon Major T. A. Thornhill, M.B. for two years, the most genial and considerate medical officer under whom it had been my privilege to serve.

On reporting myself for duty in Room 6, No. 16 Whitehall Yard, I was questioned as to my experience in a Principal Medical Officer's office, but having had no experience of that nature, my employment being wholly in Dispensaries, Ward management and Stores I was detailed for duty in the Sanitary Branch of the office. I was very much puzzled by the little interest taken in the work by the Civil element in the office. It was a six hours day work and some work must be left over for tomorrow. On reporting myself to the Staff Officer, Army Hospital Corps, I was informed that before I could get another step in promotion, I must obtain a Second Class School Certificate of Education. I informed him that for sixteen years I had a First Class School Certificate of Education in my possession awarded me a few months after joining the Corps, and another of the same class awarded me before leaving the "Cameronians" to join the Army Hospital Corps, and that a record to that effect had been entered in the Monthly Returns for sixteen years. Such however was the accuracy of Office Records in that Branch of the office that this was never recorded, the recorder in every instance apparently feeling chagrined that another should possess what he had not. First Class Certificates in the Army Hospital Corps in 1879 were few and far between.

I was not long in the office before realizing what a sinecure a post in the office was for civilians. The Chief Messenger was an ex-butler of an ex-Secretary of State for War, who before demitting office found snug billets for his dependants this being regarded as the perquisites of his office. This to a large extent accounted for the inefficiency and hauteur of the civilian clerks. They regarded their incumbency as their specific right and resented the introduction of the military element. The largest part of the work therefore naturally in consequence fell to the lot of the latter. Finding that the work in my office would not on an average occupy more than two hours a day, except on Medical Board days, I soon found snatches of work in other sections of the office and this gave me a glimpse into the whole workings of the office. The typewriter had not yet come on the market. I was not long in the office when the Chief Clerk brought me Surgeon General Wm Munro's testimonials to copy for transmission to the Horse Guards when his name was submitted for the Director-Generalship. The treatment of Surgeon General Wm Munro, C.B. by the Director-General Sir Wm Muir, K.C.B. merits a word of condemnation.

Surgeon General Munro was the most capable administrator who had served as Head of the Medical Branch from its formation. He detested an idle man and despised the man "who ran with the hare and hunted with the hounds". He had to fire the charge that others had laid, while the chief wire-puller kept himself in the background. When it came to a collision with the Horse Guards, it was the man who stood for justice and fair play to his Department who suffered most and not his trimming Chief. No man had a more righteous claim to the office of Director-General than Surgeon General Munro and few had a better record of executive and administrative work, but this went for nothing when arrayed against the tyrannous addicts of unscrupulous men armed with superior authority. Surgeon General Munro opposed the introduction of a partial unification with a semi regimentalism in the treatment of the sick. He insisted on the return to the old Regimental Hospital system, or the retention of the unification in its entirety.

Dr. Munro insisted on the medical officers having the disciplinary control of the Army Hospital Corps. The Horse Guards positively refused this, and feared the result if he should be appointed Director-General. It was then arranged that Sir Wm Muir should retain his post for another year, so as to bring Dr. Munro under the age clause of the Royal Warrant for retirement before his Chief vacated his office. The subterfuge was worthy of the man who lent himself to it.

Previous to this conflict with the Horse Guards the Army Hospital Corps had passed through varied experiences that left the men uncertain as to whom they could appeal to redress a legitimate grievance. Before the introduction of the Cardwell jumble they were paid, fed and clothed by the officers of the Purveyors' Department, punished when the necessity arose by Regimental Commanding Officers and detailed to their daily work in the Medical Branch of the Corps by the Medical Officer, and by the Purveyor in the Purveyors' Branch. The Purveyors were not Staff College men, but they were practical business men zealously serving the State and the sick soldier. The Head of the Purveyors' Department was at the War Office from whom the officers took orders. Their work was not subject to the control of the Army Medical Department hence the constant friction. The Medical Officers resented the supervision exercised by the Purveyors over diets and extras and availed themselves of every opportunity to thwart the Purveyor, and to impress on the War Office the incongruity of this divided responsibility. The outcome was the Cardwell hotch-potch of 1869-1870.

Three years after the dissolution of the Purveyors' Department regimental hospitals were abolished and with it the regimental surgeon. The medical officers became responsible for the ward equipment, stores and cookhouses, a work which requires less thought than the alleviation of human suffering. After being fleeced by incompetent and dishonest stewards, they clamoured to be relieved of the charge of the stores. The anticipated freedom from subordination to the Purveyors' Department in the matter of diets and extras was not realised, as the Commissariat Branch controlled hospital supplies. This led to the creation of what was intended to be a subordinate branch of the Medical Department similar to what worked so efficiently in India. The Regulations governing this creation was so carelessly manipulated as to give the new officers combatant rank instead of Departmental and relative. This led to further disturbances. Medical officers had to submit passes for leave required by their subordinates for the approval of the Lieutenants and Captains or Orderlies, who in some instances would refuse the indulgence or grant it when it was refused by the Medical Officer. The medical officers had overshot the mark and jumped out of the frying pan into the fire. A general scramble was made by medical officers who had influence at Whitehall to have their hospital sergeants commissioned whether qualified or not. Commanding Officers who would not commission them into their own Corps did their utmost to have them commissioned into the Army Hospital Corps, with the result that several of the Hospital Corps Sergeants who were really quite unsuitable for such promotion were commissioned as Lieutenant of Orderlies. Some of them disappeared from the Corps Record within two years, while a small proportion only reached the age limit for retirement.

To precipitate the movement for the transfer of the Command of the Corps to the medical officers, the apothecaries who had no military training were constituted interpreters of the Queen's Regulations and punitive clauses of the Army Discipline Act. It was impossible that such a farce should succeed, and in the attempt to overthrow it,

Surgeon General Munro came into violent collision with the Horse Guards and sacrificed his further advancement in his eagerness to secure combatant rank and status for the Army Medical Officers. The medical officers now enjoy all that Dr. Munro contended for.

On one of his accustomed visits to the various sections of the office, the Chief Clerk asked me if I had much work on hand, I told him that I had very little to do. He left the office grinning, mentally deploring that I was so unappreciative of the mercies received in a branch of the War Office as to complain of having nothing to do. On the following morning he returned and asked if I was really serious in wanting more to do. I assured him that I was. He then asked if I would give up the second division clerk. I replied that I would gladly. The civilian clerk raged when the order came for him to report himself in No. 16 room for duty. "Tom Paine" and "Town Talk" his only reading would henceforth be reserved for home consumption.

I met him fourteen years after, when he was still a second division clerk, but I understand from a friend in the office that he had abandoned "Tom Paine" and "Town Talk" for the "Review of the Churches". There was so little to be done in the Sanitary Branch that it was transferred to the Statistical Branch, thus relieving a Deputy Surgeon General and a Surgeon Major to take up further duties.

During Surgeon Major Alfred Clarke's absence on leave, an important paper came into the office from the Principal Medical Officer in Bermuda. It was an application for two water tanks for the camp where rifle practice was carried out. It was strongly urged by the Principal Medical Officer and equally by the Commanding Officer Royal Engineers and by the General Officer administering the Government. All the Heads of Departments through which it had already passed had refused it, by the Director of Barracks and Works, by the Surveyor-General and by the Treasury—all with the same cry. "No funds available".

I put the correspondence at the bottom of my basket, determined that if I found my country-man, Surgeon General Munro, in the dumps, I would delay the paper until he was bright and cheerful when I would bring it forth. When we reached it one morning, he quietly remarked. "We must say just as the rest have said." I said I did not think so, as the tanks were an absolute necessity for the Health of the Troops. To my astonishment that was what he wrote. I learnt three year later that the money for the tanks had been provided as requested.

Having been four months in the office, I applied to the Staff Officer Army Hospital Corps for permission to be examined in the subjects required to qualify for a commission. I was informed that until those who had previously qualified were commissioned, there would be no further examinations. I reminded him of the injustice of withholding from me the Circular Letter giving the subjects for examination. I remarked that I was senior to all those who had qualified and that I was the only one who held a First Class Certificate of Education, adding that I had been repeatedly passed over by men whom I had coached for promotion, and by men whose character would not stand enquiry if their defaulter sheets had not been withheld. I was promptly silenced and requested not to impugn the justice of his decision in the matter of promotion.

On returning to my room, I met Surgeon General Munro, to whom I told the result of my application to the Staff Officer. To this he remarked "I was not aware that he was supreme in matters of this nature." He at once summoned the Staff Officer into his

room and instructed him to warn me to appear before a Board of Examiners on the following Tuesday. On completion of my examination I was complimented by the President on the result and informed that I should have the first vacancy in the Corps. I was very pleased not so much for obtaining the rank, but for the pension that was attached to it. My fortieth birthday was hovering in sight.

Two commissions were reported vacant early in November. Before these were reported in the office, I had a visit from a tailor in Hanover Square who invited me to be at his office for measuring for my uniform, as I was to be gazetted the following Friday. When he found me indifferent to his request, he pulled a paper from his pocket—an official letter from which he read a sentence or two, but refused to show me the signature. Such information is often bought at a high price.

On the 17th December Sergeant Major Warren and I were gazetted Lieutenants of Orderlies to fill the vacancies (*W.K.M. On the 13th July 1968 looking through The United Services Magazine (1880). Part I, Page 243, I read the Army Gazette "Army Hospital Corps. To be Lieutenants of Orderlies, Colour Sergeant Wm. Morrison vice F. Nacreagh, 17th December 1879". The rank of Colour Sergeant was a surprise to me. Interesting that his promotion was alongside that of a Sergeant Major.*)

Soon afterwards I was directed to report myself to the Principal Medical Officer at Aldershot for duty at that station.

(To be continued)